

**ANALYSIS OF ELECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE OFFICERS BY POPULAR
VOTE**

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The problem was that the Mills River Fire Department elects its officers by popular vote and there was no determination as to whether or not this was the most effective method of officer selection. The purpose of this research was to identify the most effective method to select volunteer officers and to determine an implementation strategy for the Mills River Fire Department. The problem was researched using descriptive and evaluative research. The research questions were:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of electing volunteer fire officers by popular vote?
2. What other means of selecting volunteer fire officers are currently practiced?
3. Which method would serve the Mills River Fire Department best?
4. How could this method be implemented in the Mills River Fire Department?

The procedures included a literature review to determine the advantages and disadvantages of electing fire officers. Surveys of fire departments were conducted to identify means of officer selection and to find which method would best serve the Mills River Fire Department. Surveys and a literature review determined implementation plans.

The results of this research identified that electing fire officers by popular vote was not the most effective method. Utilization of an objective testing process with minimum qualifications was found to have the most advantages for officer selection. It was identified, however, that election by popular vote was a method consistent with

methods used by similar sized departments. The implementation of an objective testing process was found to best be completed by including the entire department in its development.

The author recommends that an objective testing method be developed for officer selection. The entire department should be involved in this process to maximize opportunity for success. Further analysis and evaluation of selection methods should be completed to continuously monitor effective officer selection.

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Introduction

The problem is the Mills River Fire Department elects its officers by popular vote and there is no determination as to whether or not this is the most effective method of officer selection. The purpose of this research is to identify the most effective method to select officers in a volunteer fire department and to determine an implementation strategy for the Mills River Fire Department. The author will research this problem using descriptive and evaluative research. Literature will be reviewed to determine the advantages and disadvantages of electing fire officers. Surveys of other volunteer fire departments will be conducted to determine what other means of volunteer officer selection is available and which would best serve Mills River Fire Department. Surveys and literature review will determine implementation plans. The research questions are:

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of electing volunteer fire officers by popular vote?
6. What other means of selecting volunteer fire officers are currently practiced?
7. Which method would serve Mills River Fire Department best?
8. How could this method be implemented in the Mills River Fire Department?

Background and Significance

The Mills River Fire Department currently serves a population of approximately 8,000 people living in a 25 square mile area. The fire department operates out of one station staffed by fifty volunteer firefighters and one career firefighter. The officers of

the department are volunteers and currently are elected by popular vote. There are no minimum requirements to become a volunteer fire officer.

In the past, the Mills River Community has consisted of rural farmland with few commercial structures and minimal requests for service from the fire department. The popular vote method of selecting officers for the department provided adequate leadership and did not hamper the department's ability to grow and progress. The time commitment required by officers was related to the volume of calls answered by the department. There was no identifiable need to impose minimum requirements on officers as the department had consistently produced quality, effective leaders.

The Mills River community and fire department is faced with rapidly changing demographics. Explosive growth in the community is bringing about current changes at a rapid pace. The department hired a career firefighter to supplement the volunteer staff in 2002 and is currently building a second station. These additions are in response to amplified requests for service from an increasing community population. A neighboring town annexed a portion of our response area in 2001, which is requiring the officers to interact with the town council and to be more accountable for their actions and decisions.

The future of the fire department has even larger changes on the horizon. The Mills River community incorporated most of the department's response area into a town in 2003. This will demand even more political oversight and accountability from our officers as they interact with a second political subdivision that will provide the majority of our financial resources. A planned sewer line through the heart of the fire district will undoubtedly exponentiate growth and introduce even more commercial and industrial occupancies that require service from the department. The increasing demand for service

will require additional career staff to be added and move the department from a mostly volunteer department to a true combination department.

The research problem addresses whether popular vote is the most effective method to select volunteer fire officers in this changing environment of increased time, service, and political demand. The research problem relates to the National Fire Academy's Executive Development course. This relation is through the terminal objective taught in the course for students to "Provide consistent, effective transformational leadership to design and build a positive culture in their organizations." (National Fire Academy, 1998, p. SM 5-2). This research problem also relates to the United States Fire Administration's operational objective "To respond appropriately in a timely manner to emergent issues" (NFA, 2002-2003, USFA 5-year operational objective, ¶ 3). The increasing demand for service and increasing accountability demanded from fire departments throughout the country is causing volunteer fire officer selection to be an emergent issue.

Literature Review

A literature review is being conducted to explore the works of others on the topic of volunteer fire officer selection to gain insight into the research problem. Four questions are asked during the literature review. First, what are the advantages and disadvantages of electing volunteer fire officers by popular vote? Second, what other means of selecting volunteer fire officers are currently practiced? Third, which method would serve the Mills River Fire Department best? Finally, how could this method be implemented in the Mills River Fire Department?

The disadvantages of electing officers by popular vote are well documented in the literature. One major disadvantage is the liability incurred by a department that uses a totally subjective selection system. A system with no objective components has the potential to place officers with little or no training in supervisory positions. Goodson and Sneed (1999) highlight the importance of ensuring officers are qualified by stating “in our increasingly litigious society, company officers are more vulnerable than ever before to being held personally liable for their actions or inactions” (p.31). Hogan (2002) adds:

In the *City of Canton (Ohio) v. Harris* case (489 U.S. 378) the U. S. Supreme Court held that a local government can be held liable under section 1983 of the Civil Rights Act for failure to adequately train or supervise its employees if that failure leads to a deprivation of a person’s constitutional rights. (p. 77)

If an officer’s fire ground decisions are called into question, it is possible that the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1021 (1997) Standard on Fire Officer Professional Qualifications will be used as a standard to measure a department’s selection process. Hogan explains, “consensus standards such as those of the NFPA 1500 may be used as the yardstick against which your department’s performance will be measured” (p. 80). The department has potential liability if the officer in question does not meet these standards as explained by Marinucci (1995) “Promotions based on voting also can expose the department to liability problems if qualifications are not used as part of the promotion process” (p. 917). Savia adds that “we place people in management roles (and I include line officers in this group) who have no management training or experience....what training do they have in this area to avoid legal liability?” (2000, p. 8). Popular vote also

has a greater potential to place unqualified officers into positions due to favoritism as documented by Marinucci (1995) “Voting can easily make officer selection a popularity contest, restricting officers when tough decisions need to be made” (p. 917). Beetschen (1999) states also that popular vote “is precarious because it frequently belies a popularity contest” (p. 16). Meyer (1990) adds that “current promotional processes, which are predominantly by election can be the subject of considerable bias and subjective rational such as popularity, which all to [*sic*] frequently sidelines the individuals with the best capabilities of impacting the effectiveness of their departments” (p. 24). Alexander (1989) identifies that popular vote could be unfair and that “objective tests are more impartial and therefore fairer” (p. 7). Alexander also writes that a disadvantage of popular vote is that candidates potentially do not have a sincere interest in the position, “when candidates must compete for the position only those genuinely interested will invest the time and energy to prepare themselves” (p. 7). The only advantage to popular vote that could be found in the literature was from Marinucci (1995) “elected officers may receive more support from the membership” (p. 917). This advantage is countered by Maloney (2001) when he brings up the point that “these obstacles are clearly defined by Colella (1988) and Stewart (1988) noting that individuals not qualified to be officers may not have the respect of the followers and compromise safety of the unit” (p. 10). In summary, the literature supports the premise that selecting officers by popular vote has many disadvantages but little to know advantage at all.

Other means of selecting volunteer fire officers are identified in the literature. Smoke (1999) lists these other processes:

Some had a selection process, using tests and other assessment tools to determine the individuals best qualified for promotion. Other departments based the promotion process on seniority, implying that the person with the longest service was the best qualified for advancement. Some departments were not so subtle: relatives and friends were promoted ahead of others.... imagine the consequences of letting other professionals, such as civil engineers or physicians, practice under similar conditions (pp. 7-8).

Marinucci (1995) gives these methods: "Three methods commonly used are: 1. voting by membership; 2. appointment by the chief; and 3. a competitive testing process" (p. 917). Beetschen (1999) gives the following, "other methods include political appointment, appointment by seniority or rotation, membership vote, and the dubious honor of selection because no one else wants the job" (p. 16).

The literature supported using a testing process more than any other process. Coleman & Granito (1988) support this notion by stating "the primary purpose of an examination or test is to identify those applicants who possess or are likely to possess the highest degree of SKA/JBs needed to fulfill the job requirements" (p. 271). Alexander (1989) adds:

Assessment centers were becoming an increasingly popular method of promotion by fire departments across the nation. One study showed that by 1986 43 percent of fire departments surveyed used assessment centers as part of the process of making promotional decisions (p. 7).

Beetschen (1999) states "the best is to use a simple testing procedure, similar to that used in career agencies, but one that is designed around the functions and goals of

your department” and he adds “it’s important that future promotions be based on solid criteria that are fair to the department’s operations and are understood by all” (p. 16). Marinucci (1995) adds “competitive testing generally is perceived as being the most fair, but should not be construed as foolproof. There is always the human factor to consider. Competitive testing probably offers the best long-term solution for making promotions” (p. 917). Alexander states the added benefit that “The candidates get an appreciation for what the job entails” (Alexander, 1989, p. 7).

Appointment was the next method supported most by literature. Marinucci (1995) writes:

Appointment by the chief may be perceived as favoritism, but does allow the chief to better develop his own team. Since the chief is responsible for the entire organization, proper choices can be made. Still, personalities can cloud the selections (p. 917).

Alexander (1989) states also that “selections were made by appointment from the Chief based on recommendations by senior company officers” (p. 7).

Marinucci (1995) sums up by stating:

Department history and culture play important roles in selecting an appropriate promotional process. Regardless of the selection method, the most important part of promotion is to establish prerequisites for the positions to ensure that only qualified people will compete. Training requirements must be part of any promotional procedure. (p. 917).

This is a good summary of the literature found. Most sources supported using a testing process with minimum qualifications to test.

The method that would serve the Mills River Fire Department best is a testing process with minimum qualifications instead of popular vote. Savia (2000) writes about the fallacies of popular vote when a good officer gets voted out: “What happened? Did that person suddenly lose all of the experience and knowledge necessary to be an officer” (p. 8)? He continues by stating, “do volunteers want officers who lead and make decisions based on their education, training, and experience? Or do we continue to designate officers based on their ability to develop and maintain a consensus large enough to keep winning elections” (p. 8)? Alexander (1989) writes of the benefits of using a testing process over other methods “For the first time in its history, Kettering had a volunteer officer promotion system which was not only fair and impartial but also produced a new company officer who understood the job responsibilities and was prepared to handle them” (p. 14). He continues:

The Volunteer Firefighters Management Book published in 1982 pointed out that volunteer officer selection by popular vote was no longer an acceptable method to appoint someone to a responsible position and that selection should be based on, among other things, a demonstrated understanding of fire suppression skills and interpersonal relations as well as the ability to behave with self control (pp. 14-15).

Other authors add the importance of using a testing process over popular vote by stating: “the volunteer firefighter will have to be trained to a higher level, they will need to keep themselves in physical and mental shape, and they will have to give more” (Snook, Johnson, Olsen, & Buckman, 1998, p. 10); and “What is changeable in the volunteer fire service is the process of advancement by election. The establishment of

written criteria for volunteer fire officer qualifications, an objective promotional process based on those requirements and reinforcing the need for self education and development of fire officers, is the only method by which a more effective volunteer fire service will be constructed” (Meyer, 1990, p. 24). In summary, the literature supports using a testing process as the best method to select volunteer fire officers.

A testing process with minimum qualifications could be implemented in the Mills River Fire Department by utilizing recommendations from the literature. These recommendations include developing an assessment center in which “candidates are placed in job-related situations and asked to perform a series of tasks designed to evaluate their ability to perform the tasks necessary for success in the job” (Coleman & Granito, 1988, p. 271). Aamodt (1999) explains “the first step in creating an assessment center is, of course, to do a job analysis. From this analysis, exercises are developed that measure different aspects of the job” (p. 244). Preparing firefighters for the promotional process is important stresses Compton (2000) when he writes “training programs must address today’s needs and prepare employees for tomorrow” (p. 36). He continues that “it is not only our job to manage the organization today, but also to develop people in the organization to manage and lead tomorrow” (pp. 36-37).

The main key identified in the literature to implement a testing process is to involve the department in the process. Alexander (1989) states that “experience had proven that change was better accepted when the volunteers had direct input into the change” (p. 8). Hall (1995) also includes the importance of using everyone when he writes “the supervisor’s most important task is to make sure that employees participate in every part of the change process” (p. 149). Compton (2000) alludes to the fact that the

entire organization needs to be sold on the process as he states “the most effective, widely embraced change is that which truly improves the core performance of the organization” (p. 43).

It is also important to take into account differing opinions. Compton (2000) writes “Listen to those who disagree with a particular change” (p. 44). He also stresses the importance of including the entire department in change because “there are growing pains involved with development that cannot always be transferred. Organizations sometimes need to tailor change to their own culture and environment in order for it to be successfully implemented” (1999, p. 3). There will be individuals uncomfortable with the change and the department needs to prepare for this because “While you’re in the process of change, you’re going to be vulnerable” (Staley, 1998, p. 61). Standards to develop the process are important to adhere to because “while these standards aren’t carved in stone as a model of performance, they are universally recognized as performance guidelines” (Wilder, 1997, p. 17).

It will be paramount to the successful implementation of a testing process that the department understands the reason for the change. Effective officers are important to the success of the entire department. “It is vital that the chief empower officers to handle many aspects of the department’s day-to-day business.... The chief officer cannot possibly handle everything that needs to be handled” (Beetschen, 1999, p. 12).

The testing process will improve the department and everyone needs to understand why. Some benefits include more officers positions available. Savia (2000) writes “Don’t be afraid to establish lots of officer positions” (p. 12). Johnson (1995) adds that “promotions within a department are one of the most important functions the

fire chief can administer” (p. 251). In summary the literature identifies the importance of involving the department in the change and expressing to them the importance for the change.

The literature review gives valuable insight into the research problem. The literature supports that there is little or no advantage to selecting officers by popular vote. The literature further identifies that there are several selection methods available and using a testing process with minimum qualifications is the best method to select effective officers. The literature states that implementing a new selection process will best be accepted by including the entire department and using the promotional process as a tool to increase department effectiveness.

Procedures

Survey

A survey of fire departments in the United States was performed to determine what methods of selection for volunteer fire officers are in use. The purpose of the survey also was to determine a relationship between department demographics and officer selection methods. The survey did not require the respondents to identify themselves and consisted of six questions about the surveyed department. 800 randomly selected fire departments were surveyed with 384 respondents.

Sample Size

A representative sample size was desired to give the survey a high level of accuracy. There are approximately 30,000 fire departments in the United States, so to assure a 95% confidence level, the sample size would need to be 379 (NFA, 1998, SM 3-40). The most comprehensive list that could be identified by this author of almost every

fire department in the United States is the firehouse.com fire department network on the web site http://cms.firehouse.com/content/fhnet/usa_network.jsp. This network has over 30,000 fire departments listed with contact information and categorized by state. Each fire department was assigned a number by their alphabetical position within their state. 31,486 numbers were assigned as this was the number of fire departments on the network on June 5th, 2003. The author randomly generated 600 numbers from 1 to 31,486. These random numbers were placed on a spreadsheet and departments were looked up according to their assigned number on the network. Contact information including e-mail address, fax number, telephone number, and mailing address were recorded for each randomly selected department. 577 of the 600 departments were contacted by one of the medium listed above. To minimize costs, departments were contacted in this order:

1. E-mail address
2. Fax
3. Telephone
4. Mail

Every department had a minimum of a mailing address listed on the network, so an attempt to contact every department was made. 23 letters were returned as undeliverable; so only 577 departments were actually contacted initially.

289 of the initial 600 surveys were returned. To increase the confidence level of the survey, 100 additional departments were randomly selected using the same method as before. Only 48 surveys were returned from this second selection. To increase the sample size further, 100 more departments were selected. This returned an additional 44 surveys for a total of 384 out of 800 or 48% of the departments responding.

Limitations

85 or 22.5% of the departments that responded back were all paid departments. If the survey is a valid representation of fire departments in the United States, then one would expect only 10% of the respondents to be all paid since this reflects the percentage of all paid departments in the United States. This is higher than representative number of all paid departments weakens the confidence of the survey as a representative sample. This could be attributed to the fact that all paid departments have someone at their station at all times and more time resources to complete and return a survey. The results of the survey however were not affected because the calculations were only performed on departments that had volunteer fire officers. The high number of paid departments responding did, however, lessen the sample population slightly.

Another limitation to the survey was that a large number of surveys were done by telephone. These made it more difficult for respondents to remain anonymous and possibly were not as truthful with their answers. The author does not believe that this occurred because the answers were non-incriminatory and the respondents would have little reason to be untruthful.

One more limitation is that some respondents may have interpreted the term “volunteer fire officer” as any member of the department instead of officers of the department. This possibly could have caused some respondents to answer questions about fire officers believing they were answering questions about firefighters. This limitation is believed to be very minimal by the author.

Definition of Terms

All Volunteer-The fire department has no paid members, only volunteers.

Mostly Volunteer-The fire department has more volunteer firefighters than paid firefighters.

Mostly Paid-The fire department has more paid firefighters than volunteer firefighters.

All Paid-The fire department has no volunteer members, only paid.

Volunteer fire officer-An officer of the department who is not paid for their services.

This includes lieutenants, captains, chiefs, and anyone in a supervisory role at the company level or higher.

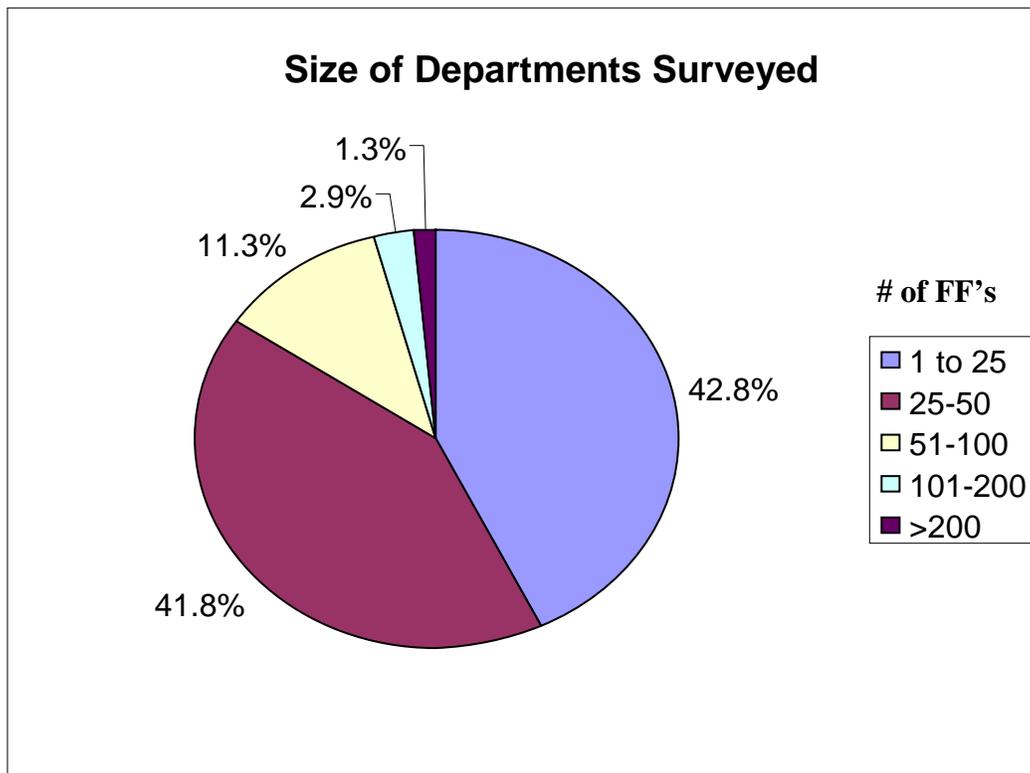
Results

A review of 21 professional journals, Executive Fire Officer Program papers, textbooks, and other related documents identified useful information for the research problem. A random survey of 800 fire departments yielded valuable insight into the types of selection methods and what departments are currently using. A total of 384 surveys were returned out of 800 that were randomly distributed. This gave only a 48% response rate but this was a large enough sample population to have a high confidence rate in the survey.

Survey question one, "Number of firefighters in department", yielded the following: 133 (42.8%) respondents had between 1 and 25 firefighters, 130 (41.8%) respondents had between 26 and 50 firefighters, 35 (11.3%) respondents had between 51 and 100 firefighters, 9 (2.9%) respondents had between 101 and 200 firefighters, and 4

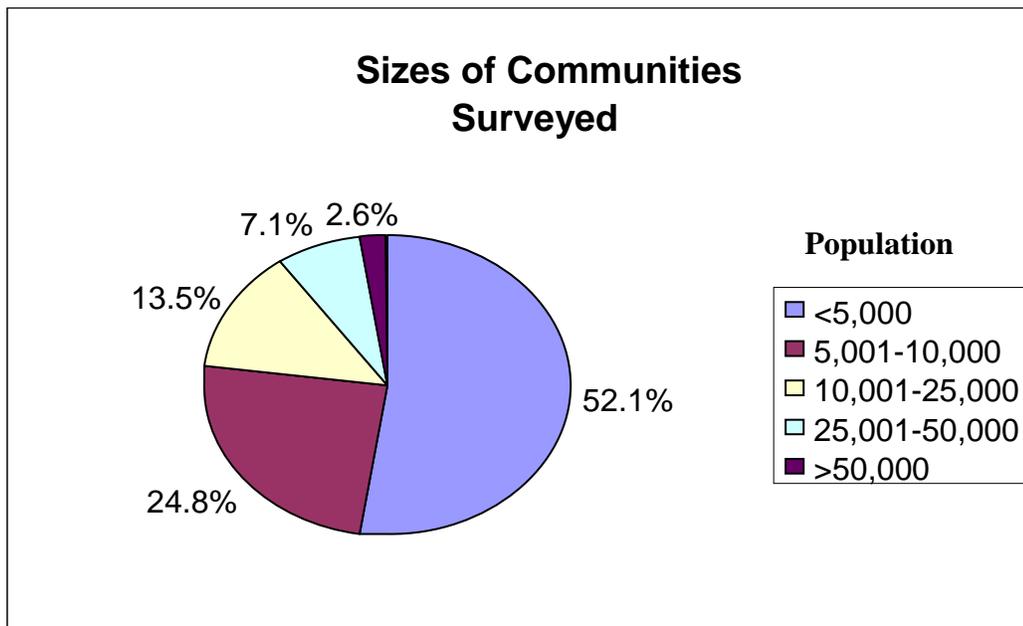
(1.3%) respondents had over 200 firefighters. 73 respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 1



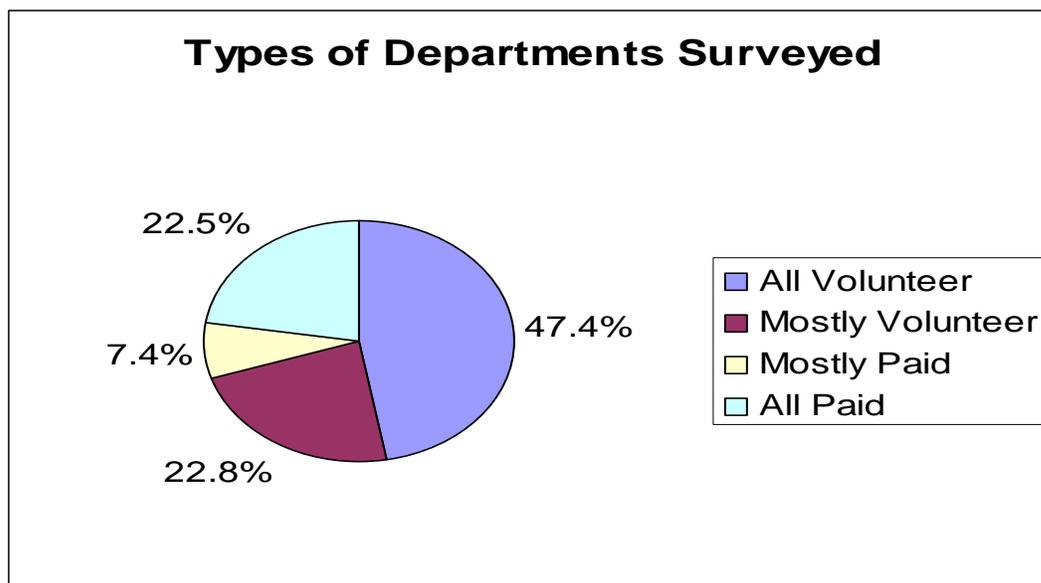
Survey question 2, "Community population", yielded the following: 162 (52.1%) respondents protected a population of less than 5,000 people, 77 (24.8%) respondents protected a population between 5,001 and 10,000 people, 42 (13.5%) respondents protected a population between 10,001 and 25,000, 22 (7.1%) respondents protected a population between 25,001 and 50,000 people, 8 (2.6%) respondents protected a population of more than 50,000 people. 73 respondents left this question blank.

Figure 2



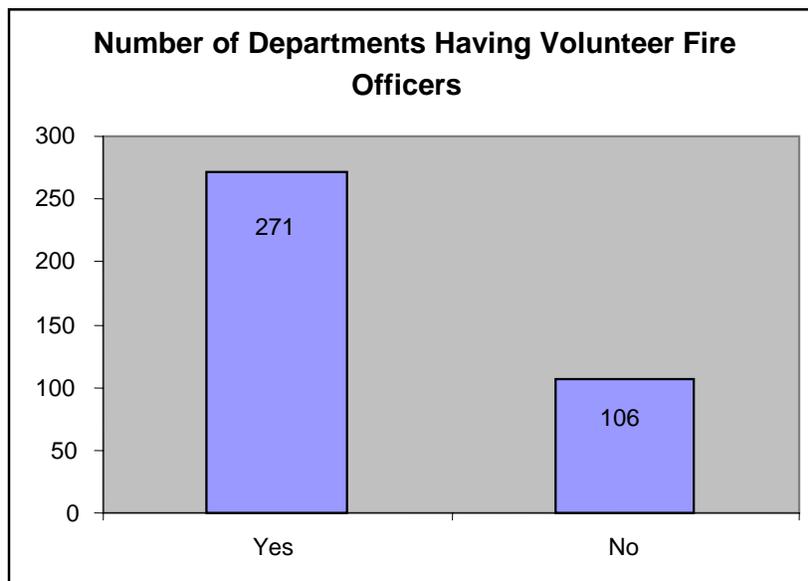
Survey question 3, “Type of department”, yielded the following: 179 (47.4%) respondents had all volunteer staffing, 86 (22.8%) respondents had mostly volunteer staffing, 28 (7.4%) respondents had mostly paid staffing, 85 (22.5%) had all paid staffing. 6 respondents left this question blank.

Figure 3



Survey question 4, “Does your department have volunteer fire officers?”, yielded the following: 271 (72%) respondents have volunteer fire officers, 106 (28%) respondents do not have volunteer fire officers. 7 respondents left this question blank.

Figure 4



Survey question 5, “What is your department’s method for selecting volunteer fire officers?”, yielded the following: 88 (32.6%) respondents selected their volunteer officers by appointment, 138 (51.1%) respondents selected their volunteer officers by popular vote, 44 (16.3%) respondents selected their volunteer officers by a testing process, and 0 (0.0%) respondents selected their volunteer officers by any other means. This question was not applicable to 107 respondents and 7 respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 5

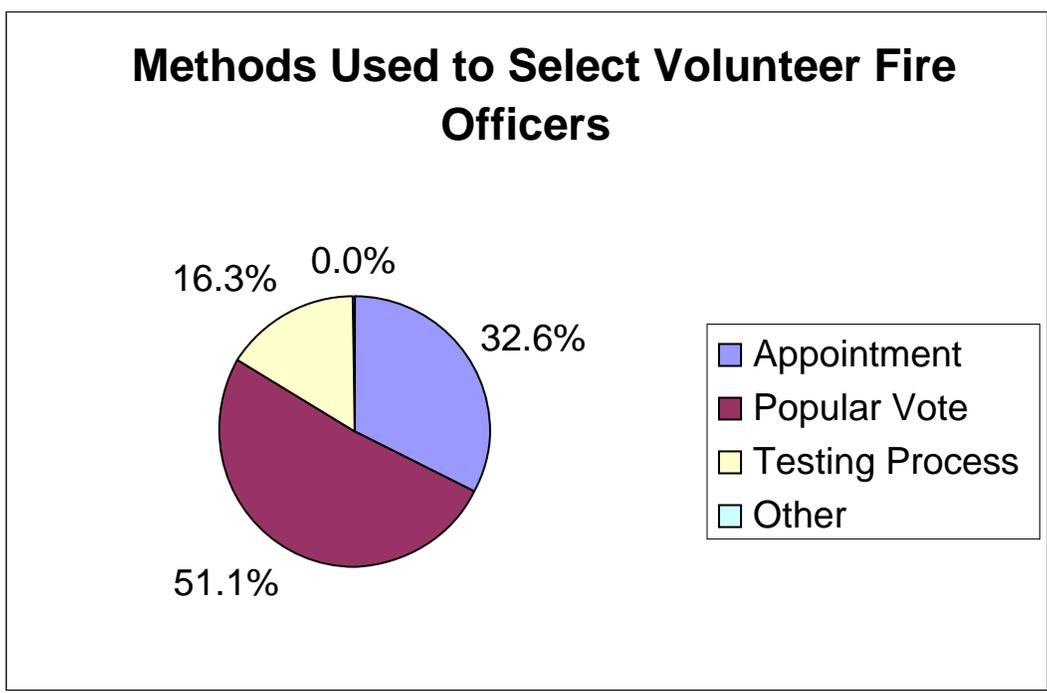


Figure 6

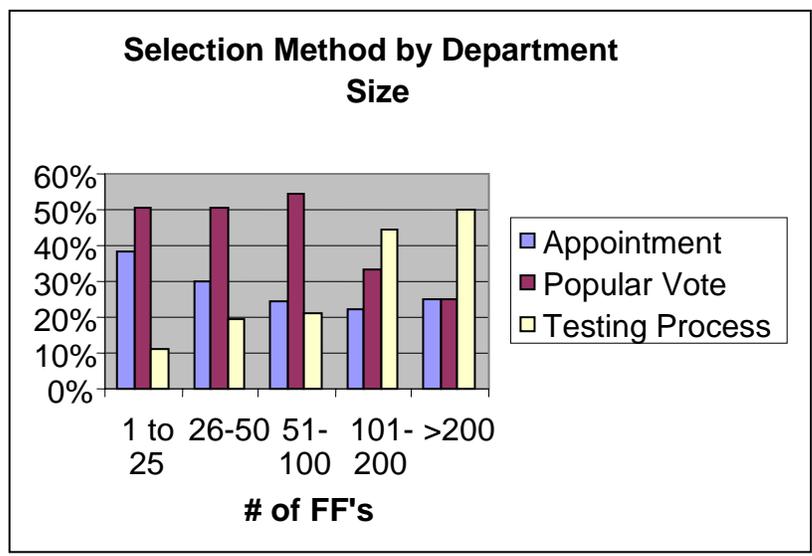
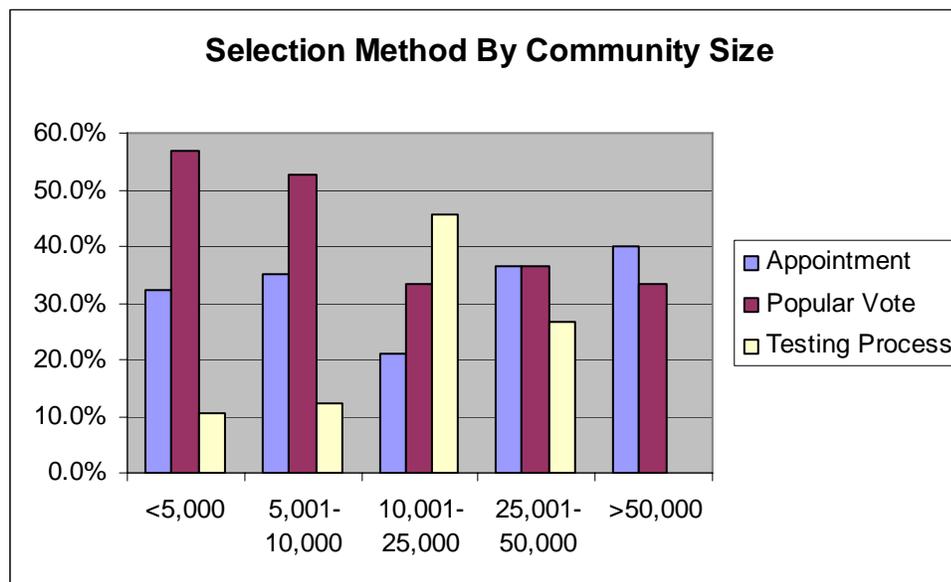
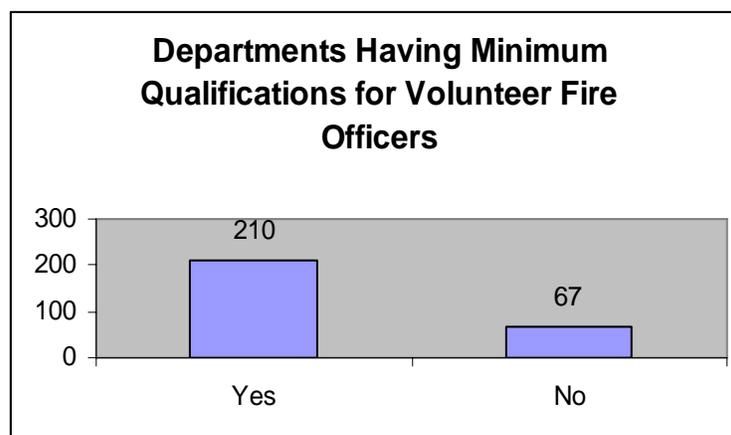


Figure 7



Survey question 6, “Does your department have minimum qualifications for volunteer fire officers?” yielded the following: 210 (76%) respondents have minimum qualifications for their volunteer fire officers, 67 (24%) do not.

Figure 8



1 (0.4%) respondent has call response as a minimum qualification for their volunteer fire officers, 66 (24.7%) respondents have certifications as a minimum qualification for their volunteer fire officers, 22 (8.2%) respondents have years of service as a minimum qualification for their volunteer fire officers, 67 (25.1%) respondents have no minimum qualifications for their volunteer fire officers, and 111 (41.6%) respondents have a combination requirements as minimum qualifications for their volunteer fire officers. This question was not applicable to 107 respondents and 10 respondents left this question blank.

Figure 9

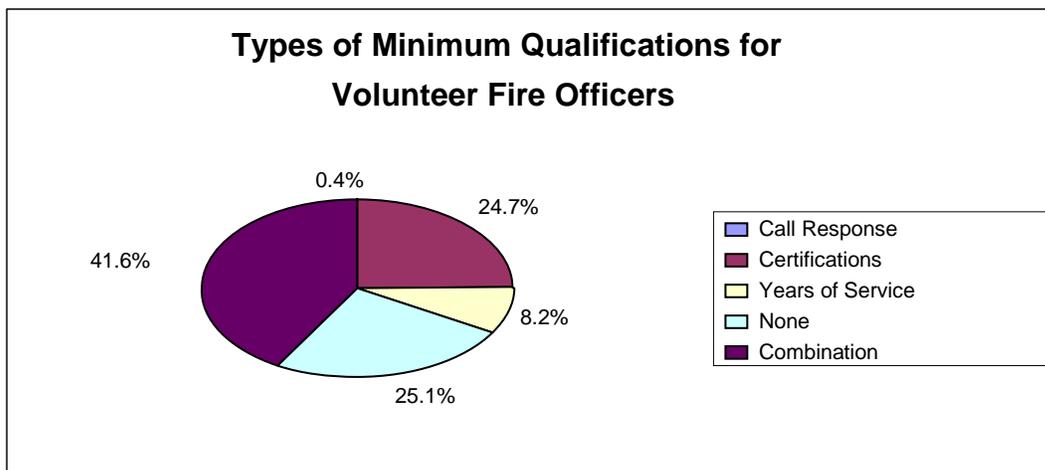


Figure 10

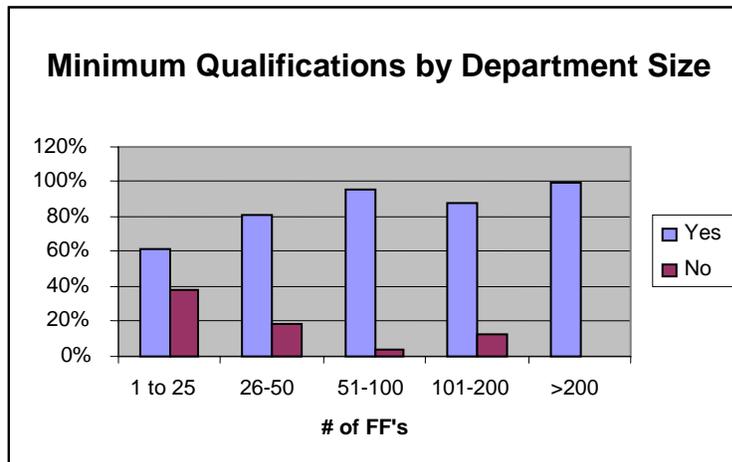
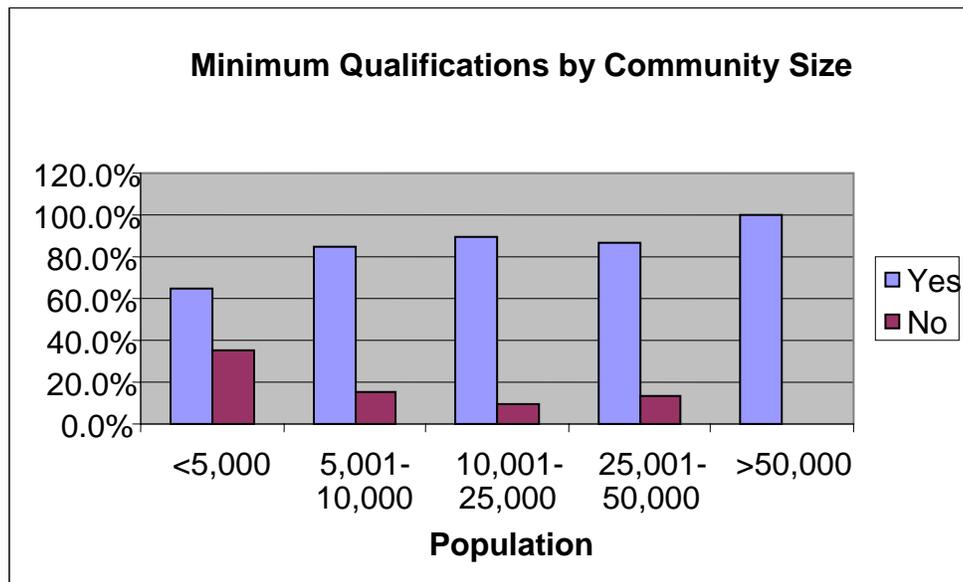


Figure 11



There were no clear advantages of electing fire officers by popular vote identified in the literature. Marinucci provided the only advantage in that “elected officers may receive more support from the membership” (p. 917). This advantage is weakened by Maloney (2001) “...individuals not qualified to be officers may not have the respect of the followers...” (p. 10). There were many disadvantages identified in the literature that included liability for the officer and the department, the pit falls of using a popularity contest as a selection method, lack of fairness, and selecting officers who are not fully committed to the job.

The means for selecting volunteer fire officers were identified in the surveys as using popular vote, appointment, and a testing process. Popular vote was the most common method of selecting volunteer fire officers. Interestingly, however, as the size of the department and community increased, so did the incidence of using a testing process as a selection method and popular vote decreased (Fig. 6 & 7).

The method that would serve the Mills River Fire Department best was identified as a testing process with minimum qualifications for officers. This was identified by gauging what is in place by other departments in the nation. The Mills River Fire Department serves a population of 8,000 people and has 50 firefighters in the department. As evidenced by the survey, most departments of this size and population require minimum qualifications for their officers. The community is growing rapidly and will soon be in the 10,000 population size. Most departments in this size community utilize a testing process for their officer selection. The use of this method would put the department more in line with similar sized departments in the rest of the country.

This method would best be implemented by including the entire department in the process. This was identified by many references in the literature review. Change was identified as the largest obstacle and including everyone is the key to overcoming this obstacle.

Discussion

The results of the study and survey correlate well with the findings of others identified during the literature review. The interesting result recognized from the survey is that as a department grows in size and the surrounding community grows, departments move from using a popular vote method of selection to using a testing process with minimum qualifications (Figs. 6 & 7). It is the opinion of this author that the reason for the shift is due to internal and external pressures on the fire department to be increasingly responsive to issues. Officer candidates who are suited to function well under these pressures can best be identified and selected by an objective testing process. The authors identified in the literature review support this opinion.

Goodson and Sneed (1999) state this sentiment well in their statement “in our increasingly litigious society, company officers are more vulnerable than ever before to being held personally liable for their actions or inactions” (p. 31). It is assumed by this author that as population and department size grows so does the litigiousness of the community. Marinucci (1995) states that “voting can easily make officer selection a popularity contest, restricting officers when tough decisions need to be made” (p. 917). It is also assumed by this author that the frequency of tough decisions will increase with community growth. Alexander also writes that a disadvantage of popular vote is that candidates potentially do not have a sincere interest in the position, “when candidates must compete for the position only those genuinely interested will invest the time and energy to prepare themselves” (p. 7). As communities and departments become more complex, the time and energy requirements of officers also become more complex.

It is the author’s interpretation of the study results presented that utilizing an objective testing process and minimum qualifications for officer selection will best prepare a fire department for future growth. The Mills River Fire Department is a department that is experiencing rapid growth and change, and is facing explosive growth and change in the near future. Increased community responsiveness from citizens and political subdivisions that did not exist even a few years ago will force the department to adapt to many new challenges. To prepare the department for the challenges ahead, quality officers who are capable need to be leading the department. The best method to identify and select these officers is through an objective testing process with minimum qualifications.

Recommendations

The Mills River Fire Department should develop a new selection process for volunteer fire officers because the current method has far more disadvantages than advantages. The results of the literature review identified this important facet of officer selection. The selection process should be an objective testing process with minimum qualifications for volunteer officers. This new process will help the department meet the increasing demands from the growing community. The process should be developed and implemented with input from the entire department as recommended by the literature.

The future of the Mills River Fire Department is one that will most definitely include rapid growth. To meet the needs of the department, officer selection will need to follow suit with current trends of officer selection in departments across the country.

It is the hopes of this author that this information will help improve the selection process at the Mills River Fire Department. It is also hoped that others may build upon and use this research as a means to improve officer selection in their department as well.

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Appendix A

July 8th, 2003

ABC Fire Department
Highway 123
Anywhere, USA 11111

Dear Fire Service Colleague:

I am conducting a survey of fire departments to identify what types of volunteer fire officer selection are in use in the United States. This research is part of an Applied Research Project for the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. I am also using this research to potentially improve the fire officer selection process in my department.

I am respectfully requesting that you take a few minutes of your time to help me out with this important endeavor. I will make the results of this survey and subsequent research project available to you if you so request. Attached is the six question survey and return information. Although not necessary, I would also like to have a copy of your department's volunteer officer selection process if this is feasible.

Please return this survey by August 12th, 2003 by e-mail, fax, or mail. Thank you very much for helping me with this project!

Sincerely,

Scott Burnette
Fire Chief
Mills River Fire Department
121 Schoolhouse Rd.
Horse Shoe, NC 28742
Bus. Phone (828)891-7959
Fax (828)891-1490
stburne@bellsouth.net

Appendix B

Volunteer Fire Officer Selection Survey

Fire Department name (Optional): _____

Please write your responses from the choices below each questionNumber of Firefighters in Department: _____
1-25 26-50 51-100 101-200 >200Community Population: _____
<5,000 5,001-10,000 10,001-25,000
25,001-50,000 >50,000Type of Department: _____
All Volunteer Mostly Volunteer
Mostly Paid All PaidDoes your department have volunteer fire officers? _____
Yes No

If so, what is your department's method for selecting volunteer fire officers?

Appointment Popular Vote Testing Process Other (please describe)

Does your department have minimum qualifications for volunteer fire officers?

Call Response Certifications Years of Service NoneThank you for helping me with this project! Please return by August 12th, 2003.Scott Burnette
Fire Chief
Mills River Fire Department
121 Schoolhouse Rd.
Horse Shoe, NC 28742e-mail: stburne@bellsouth.net
Fax: 828-891-1490
Bus: 828-891-7959

Appendix C

- Numbers in cells on worksheet correspond to respondents answers on surveys
- Answers choices were assigned from left to right for each question to facilitate spreadsheet use and data analysis.
- Example: A respondent who answered that they have between 26 and 50 firefighters will have a 2 placed in the spreadsheet to represent their answer which is the second answer choice.
- Empty cells correspond to respondent's survey questions that were not answered, or had missing or incomplete information.
- On questions #5 and #6, a 5 in the cell indicates the respondent gave a combination of answers. A 6 in the cell indicates that the question was not applicable to the respondent.

Volunteer Fire Officer Selection Survey					
#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
1	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	3	1	2	4
2	1	1	1	1	5
3	4	3	1	1	5
4	2	2	1	2	3
2	1	1	1	1	5
1	1	1	1	1	5
1	1	1	1	1	2
2	1	1	1	2	2
3	1	1	1	2	2
2	4	4	2	6	6
1	1	3	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	4
1	1	1	1	1	4
1	2	4	2	6	6
2	1	2	1	2	5
2	1	2	1	2	2
2	1	1	1	2	5
4	4	1	1	1	4

#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
1	1	2	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	3	5
3	2	1	1	2	5
3	3	3	1	2	2
2	2				
2	1	2	1	1	4
3	4	2	1	2	2
2	3	1	1	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	5
3	3	1	1	3	5
2	4	2	1	1	5
2	2	2	1	1	5
2	2	2	1	2	2
3	3	3	1	3	2
1	1	2	1	1	5
2	3	2	1	1	5
2	3	4	2	6	6
1	2	2	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	4
1	2	3	1	1	2
1	3	4	2	6	6
3	5	2	1	1	2
3	2	1	1	2	2
3	1	1	1	2	5
2	3	3	1	1	4
2	2	4	2	6	6
2	3	3	1	2	2
	3	2	1	2	4
2	1	1	1	2	5
2	3	1	1	2	3
1	3	4	2	6	6
2	3	2	1	1	2
1	2	1	1	3	2
2	2	2	1	2	5
2	2	2	1	1	2
2	3	4	2	6	6
2	2	4	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	2	2
2	2	1	1	2	4
1	1	1	1	1	4
1	1	1	1	1	2
2	3	4	2	6	6
2	4	3	1	3	4
2	2	4	2	6	6
1	2	4	2	6	6
3	2	2	1	1	5
1	1	2	1	1	5

#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
1	1	1	1	1	5
2	4	2	1	1	2
2	1	1	1	2	4
2	1	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	4
3	1	1	1	2	2
2	1	1	1	2	4
2	3	1	1	1	5
1	3	3	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	4
2	4	3	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	1	5
2	5	2	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	4
1	1	1	1	2	2
4	4	3	2	6	6
2	2	1	1	1	2
1	1	1	1	1	4
2	2	4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	3	2
1	1	1	1	1	2
4	2	2	1	2	5
2	2	1	1	3	5
2	1	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	4
1	2	1	1	2	2
1	1	2	1	1	4
4	5	2	1	2	2
2	1	1	1	2	4
1	1	1	1	2	2
2	3	1	1	2	5
2	2	2	1	2	3
1	1	1	1	2	4
1	3	4	2	6	6
2	3	2	1	1	5
2	2	2	1	2	2
3	2	1	1	2	5
3	3	1	1	2	2
1	2	2	1	2	2
2	1	1	1	2	2
2	1	1	1	2	5
3	2	1	1	1	3
2	1	2	1	3	2

#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
2	3	4	2	6	6
2	2	2	1	2	2
2	1	1	1	2	4
1	4	2	1	1	3
2	1	2	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	2
1	2	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	4
2	1	1	1	3	2
3	3	4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	5
2	3	2	1	3	4
4	5	2	1	2	5
2	1	1	1	1	5
1	2	1	1	1	5
1	2	2	1	2	5
2	2	1	1	1	5
1	1	1	1	3	5
2	4	2	1	1	5
5	3	2	1	2	2
2	1	1	1	3	2
2	4	2	1	2	5
2	1	1	1	1	4
2	1	1	1	1	5
3	2	2	1	3	5
1	2	1	1	2	4
1	1	1	1	1	2
2	2	2	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	4
2	4	2	1	3	2
2	2	1	1	2	4
2	1	1	1	2	3
2	2	1	1	1	4
1	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	3
2	2	2	1	2	5
1	2	1	1	1	2
3	1	2	1	1	2
1	1	2	1	3	5
2	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	4
2	1	1	1	2	5
2	4	4	2	6	6
2	1	1	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	5
2	1	1	1	2	3

#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
2	3	3	2	6	6
3	4	3	1	2	5
2	3	1	1	2	3
3	3	1	1	2	5
2	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	2
2	3	3	1	1	2
2	1	2	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	4
2	4	2	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	2
1	2	3	2	6	6
2	1	2	1	3	3
1	3	4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	4
2	2	2	1	3	3
2	2	1	1	2	4
1	1	1	1	1	4
1	1	2	1	2	5
3	4	2	1	3	5
3	3	2	1	3	5
1	1	1	1	2	3
1	1	1	1	1	4
1	1	1	1	1	2
1	2	3	1	1	5
1	1	1	1	1	3
2	1	3	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	2	5
2	2	3	1	3	5
2	2	2	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
4	5	2	1	2	3
	5	4	2	6	6
		3	2	6	6
4	4	2	1	3	5
2	4	1	1	2	5
2	2	3	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
2	2	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	4
2	3	3	1	3	5
2	2	2	1	3	5

#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	1	5
3	1	2	1	2	5
1	2	2	1	3	5
2	1	2	1	3	4
3	3	1	1	2	5
2	3	1	1	1	3
2	2	1	1	2	5
1	2	1	1	2	3
3	4	3	2	6	6
3		1	1	2	5
		4	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	2	5
2	4	2	2	6	6
		4	2	6	6
2	2	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
2	2	2	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	2
		4	2	6	6
3	1	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
2	2	1	1	1	5
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
3	2	1	1	1	4
2	3	3	2	6	6
		4	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	1	5
1	2	2	1	1	5
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	1
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	4
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
2	2	1	1	2	3
1	1	2	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	4

#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
2	1	1	1	2	5
		4	2	6	6
		4	2	6	6
5	5	2	1	3	2
		4	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
2	1	2	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
		4	2	6	6
2	3	2	1	3	5
2	2	2	1	3	3
		4	2	6	6
		4	2	6	6
3	3	2	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	3	2
3	1	2	1	2	5
		4	2	6	6
1		1	1	2	5
2	2	2	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	3	3
2	2	1	1	2	4
1	1	1	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
2	2	1	1	2	5
2	1	1	1	2	5
		4	2	6	6
2	2	3	1	1	4
1	1	1	1	2	4
1	1	4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
1	3	1	1	3	5
1	1	1	1	1	
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	3	2
3	3	1	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
2	2	2	1	2	5
3	3	3	1	1	5
1	2	2	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6

#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
1	1	1	1	2	2
		4	2	6	6
3	2	2	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6
2	2	2	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
1	3	1	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
1	2	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	2	5
2	1	1	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6
2	2	2	1	3	
2	1	1	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	
2	2	1	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	2	5
3	1	2	1	2	5
3	1	1		2	5
5	5	2	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	2	4
2	1	1	1	2	5
1	1	1	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	4
1	1	2	2	6	6
		4	2	6	6
1	1	3	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	2
		4	2	6	6
2	2	2	1	6	6
		4	2	6	6
2	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
4	1	2	1	1	5
1	1	2	1		
2	3	1	1	1	2
		4	2	6	6
		4	2	6	6
2	4	2	1	2	3
1	1	1	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	2
		4	2	6	6

#FF	Population	Department Type	VFO?	Selection Method	Min. Qualifications
1	1	1	1	2	3
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
1	2	1	1	1	2
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	3	3
		4	2	6	6
1	2	1	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	2
2	2	2	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6
5	2	3	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6
1	1	2	1	1	5
		4	2	6	6
2	1	2	1	1	2
		4	2	6	6
2	2	2	1	3	5
1	1	1	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	4
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	1	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	1	1	2	4
		4	2	6	6
1	1	2	1	3	5
		4	2	6	6